

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 094671

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS, FOR AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR, UNSC, MOPS, LE, IS, IR

SUBJECT: ADDED IRANIAN FORCE FOR UNIFIL

REF: STATE 93327

1. WE ARE IN A CATCH 22 SITUATION WITH REGARD TO ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT. A
CREDIBLE, PUBLIC ISRAELI STATEMENT ASSURING FINAL WITH-
DRAWAL BY AN APRIL DATE IS ESSENTIAL, BOTH TO FORESTALL A
SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE WHICH MIGHT MAKE THINGS WORSE BUT,
EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, TO PREVENT POTENTIAL UNRAVELING OF
UNIFIL ITSELF. SPECIAL UNGA ON APRIL 20-21 ON

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FINANCING UNIFIL ALSO THREATENS TO TURN INTO VERY DIFFICULT
SESSION IF ISRAELI TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL IS NOT CLEAR BY
THEN; KEY THIRD WORLD NATIONS LIKE INDIA ARE ALREADY SAYING
THEY MAY NOT CONTRIBUTE. ISRAEL WANTS TO MAKE THE
FINAL WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULES CONDITIONAL ON ASSURANCES OF AN
ADEQUATE UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT, SO THAT NO SIGNIFICANT MILITARY
VACUUM IS LEFT BEHIND. ON THE OTHER HAND, PRESENT AND

FUTURE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO PLAY THEIR ROLE BECAUSE THEY DISTRUST ISRAELI INTENTIONS. THUS, THE SITUATION APPEARS: NO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT; NO NEW TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS. ROUGHLY 2600 TROOPS WILL BE THERE, WITH THE NEPALESE DEPLOYMENT THIS WEEK

HENSIVE WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT, WHILE GOING ALL-OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE UN FOR ADDITIONAL TROOP CONTRIBUTORS.

3. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE GET IN TOUCH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY OR THE SHAH TO EXPLAIN CANDIDLY THE PRESENT DIFFICULT SITUATION IN LEBANON. YOU SHOULD EXPLAIN THAT THE NEED IS FOR ASSURANCES THAT UNIFIL CAN BE FLESHED OUT TO ABOUT 3500 MEN BY A DATE IN APRIL, STILL SHORT OF THE 4000-MAN PROJECTED TOTAL, BUT PROBABLY ADEQUATE TO ASSURE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

4. SAY THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE UNITED NATIONS HAS ASKED THE IRANIANS TO PROVIDE A NEW BATTALION (OF ABOUT 800 MEN). WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS REQUEST. IF THE IRANIANS COULD ASSURE THE UN THAT THEY WOULD SEND A FORCE OF THIS SIZE (OR IDEALLY OFFER AN EVEN MORE SIZEABLE GROUP), WE BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE A CHANCE OF BREAKING THE PRESENT LOGJAM.

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5. THE IRANIAN TROOPS PRESENTLY IN UNIFIL HAVE PERFORMED EXTREMELY WELL, AS SIILASVUO HAS CONFIDED TO US. IRAN HAS HAD EXPERIENCE IN MOVING TROOPS QUICKLY, AS IN THE DHOFAR REBELLION. ALSO, IRANIAN TROOPS ARE PROBABLY BETTER EQUIPPED AND PREPARED FOR SUCH A MOVE THAN WOULD BE THE CASE FOR CERTAIN OTHER CONTRIBUTORS, WHO MAY EVENTUALLY ARRIVE IN SOUTH LEBANON NEEDING MUCH ADDED EQUIPMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THEIR BASIC SUPPLIES.

6. IF IRAN WANTED TO MAKE ITS ADDED COMMITMENT CONDITIONAL ON ADVANCE ASSURANCES FROM THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY WOULD DECLARE A FINAL WITHDRAWAL DATE IN APRIL, AFTER AN APRIL ARRIVAL OF THE IRANIAN TROOPS, WE THINK IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN SUCH ISRAELI ASSURANCES. WE WOULD CERTAINLY PRESS THE ISRAELIS FIRMLY AND PERSISTENTLY FOR SUCH ASSURANCES. IN FACT, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE ISRAELIS FOR A SPECIFIC WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE, WITH OR WITHOUT AN ADDED IRANIAN TROOP OFFER.

7. SAY THAT IRAN, IN OFFERING THIS IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION, WOULD EARN WARM INTERNATIONAL APPLAUSE. THE STEP WOULD ENCOURAGE OTHER TROOP CONTRIBUTORS AND ADD TO UN DETERMINA-

TION TO ASSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIFIL OPERATION.

8. IN THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESS IN FLESHING OUT UNIFIL
AND IN THE ABSENCE OF A CREDIBLE ISRAELI STATEMENT,

WHAT PASSES FOR STABILITY IN LEBANON WOULD BE FURTHER
THREATENED, AND THE GENERAL MIDDLE EAST SCENE WOULD
WITNESS SIGNIFICANT RISES IN TENSIONS.

9. YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO DRAW FULLY ON ALL TRAFFIC RE-
LATING TO THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION, EXCEPT FOR THE
FRENCH COMMENTS THAT THEY MAY HAVE TO CONSIDER WITHDRAW-
ING FROM UNIFIL. CHRISTOPHER

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